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EXTERNAL FORCE PROJECTION IN THE GULF OF GUINEA AS A THREAT TO REGIONAL SECURITY: ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN MILITARY

Captain Andrew Adebovale Dacosta, ndc

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War was assumed to usher in an era of peace, stability and development. However, such hopes had been dashed. The post - Cold War era has been confronting a highly dynamic security environment far more complex, uncertain and threatening than anything nations had experienced before. While this is a time of promise and developing partnerships, it is also an era of irregular and increasingly intermittent conflicts. Adversaries unable and unwilling in some cases to face nation states have increasingly resorted to whatever means available to wreak havoc and destruction, physically, economically and psychologically, unhindered and unconstrained by conscience and civilized norms.

The changing security landscape that has emerged since the end of the Cold War continues to evolve in ways that were largely unforeseen just a few years ago. An increasingly inter-connected world is shaping our economic, political, and social realities in a manner that is in stark contrast to the previous century. The wide scope and unpredictable nature of this new landscape has compelled nations to develop new strategies that require the harmonization of the full spectrum of national power.¹

Regional co-operation has acquired increased importance with the end of the Cold War. The need to strengthen regional co-operation in Africa has also become imperative. While pursuing the goal of strengthening overall co-operation in Africa, priority may be accorded to the prospects for sub- regional co-operation. The Gulf of Guinea Commission by the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) states and the Joint Development Zone (JDZ) between Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe are examples.

Today, the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) states require the capacity to respond to threats to their maritime environment. Their ability to achieve optimum success in this security environment requires three essential elements: timely intervention to unanticipated challenges that will help mitigate or prevent crisis that are harmful to the nations' interests; the need to work closely with sub- regional partners to

1. Ayoub M, The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and The International System, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1995, p.8

60. Report on the Devolution in Pakistan: *An Assessment and Recommendation for Action* (A Study Conducted by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Department For International Development jointly), Islamabad, 2004.
 61. Schroeder, Larry (1983), *A Review of Bangladesh Zila and Union Parishad Finance* (Zila/Local Finance Project, Interim Report No.8), New York, Metropolitan Studies Programme, The Syracuse University.
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62. Dr Abdul Moin Khan, Former Minister of Bangladesh Government in Charge of Planning, Science and Information Technology Ministries, Dhaka, 24 May 2008.
 63. Mr Amir Shouket, First Secretary, Pakistan High Commission, Dhaka, 31 July 2008.
 64. Mr Harun-Ur- Rashid Khan, Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet District, 3 March 2008.
 65. Mr Khalilur Rahman, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Golapgonj Upazila, Sylhet, 5 March 2008.
 66. Mr Muzir Uddin Chaklader, Chairman, Dhaka-Dakshin Union Parishad, Golapgonj Upazila, Sylhet, 5 March 2008.

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67. <http://www.decentralization.org.pk>
68. <http://www.nrb.gov.pk>
69. <http://www.civilservice.org.pk>
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71. <http://www.un.org.pk>
72. <http://www.lgd.gov.bd>

enhance regional security; and institutional innovations that contribute to comprehensive coordination throughout the interagency and within the framework of the international community².

The geo-political area referred to as the GoG lies between latitude 20°N and 45°N on the African coast. The region is a diverse mix of eight energy-rich South Atlantic littoral states. They are: Nigeria, Angola, the Republic of Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo Brazzaville, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Gabon, and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. These countries form the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC). This wide expanse of water has, on the one hand, facilitated the free movement of vessels but it has, or the other, also enabled drug and small arms trafficking, illegal oil bunkering, and kidnapping and armed attacks on coastal oil facilities. In addition, asymmetric attacks on oil facilities, hostage taking and infiltration of terrorist cells and mercenaries into the area have tarred this region of relative peace and security into a cauldron of instability.

It will therefore, be instructive to find out if any instability in the region negatively impact on the economies of not only the countries of the region, but also the economies of the industrialized world that has made the oil of the region part of their wider national security objectives.³ As global demand for energy continues to rise, major players like the United States, the European Union (EU), and Japan are facing a new competitor in the race to secure long-term energy supplies China. China is intent on getting the resources needed to sustain its rapid growth and has thus turned to Africa to look for oil and other raw materials.

Given this, situation it can be argued that the security of the GoG will guarantee the economic survival of member states. This implies that security in the GoG is of paramount importance not only the member states, but also to the United States and its allies in the western world as well as some Asian countries. However, the GoG has to cope with numerous challenges, both exogenous and endogenous, before it can fully benefit from its riches. One of these problems stems from the weak institutions and governance seen in the countries of the region which add to the risks of "natural resource curse" which fits the theory of the Paradox of Plenty.⁴

2. Dokubo, C., Africa's 'Security in the 21st Century' in Akintidele, R. and Bassay, A, eds Beyond Conflict Resolution: Nnamdi Publishers, 2000, p.84

3. East and Central Africa Division, Africa 1 Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Gulf of Guinea and the Challenges Ahead, 2008, p.1

4. Damian Ondo Maric, Emergence of Gulf of Guinea Economy: Prospects and Challenges, IMF Office of the Executive Director, 2005.

The paper will give an overview of the GoG states, including the geo-strategic importance of the region, analyse the maritime threats they face and the challenges and vulnerabilities of the GoG. The paper will also examine what constitutes external force projection and the implications of external interests necessary in the GoG and outline the strategies to meet the challenges on the GoG.

OVERVIEW OF THE GULF OF GUINEA REGION

Geo-Strategic Importance of Gulf of the Guinea

Figure 1: Map of the Gulf of Guinea



Source: Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

The geo-political area known as the GoG results in different responses in different experts. Indeed whatever meaning or definition is ascribed to the area depends largely on the perspective from which it is being looked at, as well as the person attempting to define it. Once disregarded as the sweaty armpit of Africa and

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also reasons to fear that such a policy would not work. The weakness of the member states' armed forces is a problem that will be solved only with a paradigm shift in most of the GoG states' priority from regime security to human security and economic development of the region. Exerting effective and sustained governance over the vast maritime domain is a daunting task facing each country in the GoG and the newly established Commission. It therefore, becomes imperative to pay more attention to the role of naval forces and to re-position fleet to provide credible power in securing the Gulf. Member states have to take into account the initiatives of extra-African actors who have seized the opportunity of the vacuum to foray into the region with a wider security implication, coupled with renewed American interest in the region. For now this interests is strong and the GoG states can do nothing to oppose the American hegemony. It is therefore, imperative that member states come together and put in place a collective security mechanism in the sub-region.¹⁰

EXTERNAL FORCE PROJECTION IN THE GoG

What is force projection? According to Wikipedia, power projection (or force projection) is a term used primarily to refer to the capacity of a state to conduct expeditionary warfare, i.e. to implement policy by means of force, or the threat thereof, in an area distant from its own territory. Power projection can also be defined as, "the ability of a nation to apply all or some of its elements of national power - political, economic, informational, or military - to rapidly and effectively deploy and sustain forces in and from multiple dispersed locations to respond to crises, to contribute to deterrence, and to enhance regional stability".¹¹

This ability is a crucial element of a state's power in international relations. Any state able to direct its military forces outside the limited bounds of its territory might be said to have some level of power projection capability, but the term itself is used most frequently in reference to armies that have a worldwide reach. While traditional measures of power projection typically focus on hard power assets (tanks, soldiers, aircraft, naval vessels, etc.), the developing theory of soft power notes that power projection does not necessarily have to involve the active use of military forces in combat. Assets for power projection can often serve dual uses; deployment for humanitarian response to disasters and as an effective diplomatic lever, influencing the decision-making process and acting as a potential deterrent on other states' behaviour.

¹⁰ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Op Cit, Chapter 5 - Manuel Correia de Barros, Can the Gulf of Guinea Develop a Common Regional Oil Policy? P71.
¹¹ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

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hated by colonial bureaucrats as the kind of place where even paper clips get rusty on the desktop from the humidity of the air, the GoG has suddenly become the place of tension. It is limited to the geographic area created by the Treaty establishing the GGC on 3 July 2001. The countries of the area have a total coast length of about 1,320 nm and a combined Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of about 2,740,000 sq nm (See Figure1). Within this vast maritime domain lies the offshore asset of these countries, which the countries' military forces are required to protect. Today, the region offers caves for both hope and trepidation.⁵

The lack of maritime safety and security in the GoG is having a negative impact on stability and human security, and economic development of region. Countries in the sub-region continue to lose millions of dollars to fish poachers and are being subjected to, rampant criminal activity, trafficking in drugs, violence pollution and crude oil thefts. Through improved security, the countries will be able to manage these natural resources better for the benefit of both present and future generations. African countries' collaborating on issues relating to their shared coastal waters will have a significant impact on future prosperity and job growth in the continent.⁶

The Treaty establishing the Commission is intended to provide a framework for cooperation and development as well as for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts that may arise from the delimitation of maritime borders. As well the treaty will help the economic and commercial exploitation of natural resources within territorial boundaries, particularly in the case of overlapping EEZ of member states. Other provisions include the strengthening of cooperation in the areas of maritime security and communication among member states.⁷

In addition to oil reserves, the GoG also offer political advantages to the US and Europe as none of the member states except Nigeria belongs to OPEC. The other attraction is that most of the oil fields in the GoG are offshore and therefore protected from the vagaries of civil and border wars, coups, rebellions and revolution.⁸

Another aspect of the GoG, apart from its influence on the global energy system, is that it is also a medium for international trade. Unlike other oil-supplying regions, the GoG benefits from the absence of transit chokepoints, narrow maritime

⁵ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Oil Policy in the Gulf of Guinea: Security and Conflict, Economic Growth, Social Development, Chapter 1 - Johannes, D. Friedländer, R. The Gulf of Guinea and the Global Oil Market: Supply and Demand, p.33
⁶ Jendayi, F. Keynote Address: "Maritime Safety and Security", Gulf of Guinea Ministerial Conference, Conson, Benin, 2006, p.1.
⁷ A Defence HQ Committee Paper on "The Proposed Gulf of Guinea Guard" 2007, p.3
⁸ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Op Cit, p.33

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European Union Force Projection in the GoG

Presently, only four EU member states are carrying out substantial military activities in Africa and can be considered to have a real African policy. The states are France, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Portugal. However, unlike the US, the activities and military posture of these countries are predominantly on training and humanitarian support. The pursuit of which does not overtly pose any serious threat to the region. Consequently, rather than involving into the force projection policies of these EU states, the paper will concentrate on the establishment of AFRICOM and look at China whose foray into Africa has re-ignited America's interest in the continent in the last decade.

China's Force Projection

As mentioned earlier China in pursuit of massive economic development has become a new competitor in the race to secure long-term energy supplies.¹² For which China has turned to Africa a viable source of energy. A cursory look at China's power projection abilities reveals that China has embarked on a nuclear carrier project which is aimed at enhancing her force projection capability throughout East Asia, into Africa and Latin America. A nuclear aircraft carrier will give the Chinese military the ability to back up its forces that now are discreetly training in African and Latin American countries. U.S. officials claim that part of China's force projection efforts is to contain the US.¹³

However, evidence shows that like other global players in Africa - the British, the French, the Japanese - the Chinese level of political and economic engagement are still so modest that it does not constitute a threat as is the case with the US.

United States Africa Command

The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), the newest Command of the Department of Defense, that is responsible for US military operations and relations with 53 African nations. Indeed, its - an Area of Responsibility (AOR) cover all of Africa except Egypt. The Africa Command was established on 1 October 2007 as a temporary sub-unified command of US European Command, it became fully autonomous and operational by 30 September 2008. The Center for Contemporary Conflict of the US Navy notes that US policy towards Africa, at least in the medium-term, is to be largely defined by international terrorism, the

¹² Stephanie Hanson, China, Africa and Oil (www.cfr.org) 2008.
¹³ China Navy (www.meridians.edu.cn/archives/china080201navy2007).

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lanes such as, the Panama Canal, the Straits of Hormuz or the Suez Canal. Therefore, oil carried in tankers is less susceptible to blockades, attacks, hijacking and other accidents. These advantages notwithstanding, the region faces varying degrees of challenges.

Challenges to the Development of the Region

The major challenges include but are not limited to the following lack of development strategies and public expenditure frameworks based on over-optimistic assumptions, overspending and inefficiencies.

Another pertinent question that comes to mind is whether GoG member states can create a regional oil policy that can promote their security and development? Although they differ in many ways, the countries of this region share several common characteristics besides their oil. They all have weak governments, underdeveloped economies and a shortage of qualified human capital. Their populations suffer from poverty, hunger, endemic diseases, illiteracy, unemployment etc. These are not very promising ingredients for successful integration.

The arguments in favor of a regional oil policy include the need to defend common interests against the major multinational oil corporations, possibility of collective bargaining with the Americans, existence of regional organizations, and the absence of major conflicts among the states of the region. The arguments against such a regional policy include the chronic weakness of their state institutions, their under-developed economies, heavy foreign debts, poor social conditions and widespread poverty. All of these would undermine their ability to negotiate advantageous conditions for their resources.

THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES IN THE GULF OF GUINEA'S MARITIME DOMAIN

There is growing awareness that the vast resources and potential of the GoG are being undermined by multifaceted domestic, regional and international threats and vulnerabilities. Rather than contributing to stability and economic prosperity for countries in this sub-region, pervasive insecurity in this resource-laden maritime environment has resulted in huge financial losses and significantly constraining investment and economic prospects resulting in crime and potentially adverse political consequences. It may be noted that concept of security which has two broad characteristics in many African countries. First, security has been associated with the perpetuation of a regime and not necessarily the welfare of a country and its inhabitants. Secondly, the focus has been primarily land-centric, because regime security seldom had a maritime dimension.

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increasing importance of African oil to American energy needs, and the dramatic expansion and improvement of Sino-Africa relations since the turn of the century.¹⁴

Scope of AFRICOM Operations

The focus of AFRICOM's missions will be diplomatic, economic and humanitarian. It will be aimed at prevention of conflict, rather than at military intervention, according to Theresa Whelan, Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs.¹⁵ General Ward has told the Senate Armed Services Committee that AFRICOM would first seek "African solutions to African problems." His testimony made AFRICOM sound like a magnanimous effort for the good of the African people.¹⁶ This is, to an extent, misleading because all US combatant commands have the same responsibilities in general; to plan, direct and execute US military operations in their assigned AOR. AFRICOM is only different in that the situation on the continent, US officials believe, would be better served by the military.

Objectives of AFRICOM

The White House states that the objective of AFRICOM is as follows:

"AFRICOM will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa."¹⁷ While the U.S. Department of State stated that:

"The U.S. military's new command center for Africa, (AFRICOM), will play a supportive role as Africans continue to build democratic institutions and establish good governance across the continent. AFRICOM's foremost mission is to help Africans achieve their own security, and to support African leadership efforts."¹⁸

These seemingly noble objectives notwithstanding, the idea did not receive widespread acceptance by African governments. This resulted in a series of controversy. Since the February 2007 announcement of AFRICOM's creation, there have been numerous reports on growing African resistance to the new US military command. In August 2007, Dr. Wafala Okumu, a research fellow at the Institute

¹⁴ Gen William "Kip" Ward, USA African Command, AFRICOM Dialogue (www.africom.mil) 2007.
¹⁵ Theresa Whelan, Creation of USA Africa Command - Department of Defence Bloggers Roundtable, 2007.
¹⁶ Gen William "Kip" Ward, Op Cit.
¹⁷ Danny Glover and Nicole C. Lee, TransAfrica Forum (www.transafricaforum.org/taf/taf.html).

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Consequently, maritime security arrangements in the GoG are under-resourced. However, a number of recent national and regional initiatives suggest a paradigm shift. As African countries, commercial entities, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders have increasingly come for recognize the wide-ranging benefits of enhanced maritime security. The emergence of GoG as one of the strategic regions of the world, especially in terms of energy requirements and supply, has set about a beehive of activities and competition amongst the world's superpowers as well as between mega oil companies.⁹

While there may be varied factors that could lead to security threats in the GoG, the following constitute some of the major threat and vulnerability factors: competition amongst the super-powers, internal conflicts, criminal activities, lack of maritime domain awareness, inadequate legislative and judicial arrangements and weak infrastructure amongst others.

Armed Forces of GoG States

From the foregoing, it is clear that member states are capable of monitoring activities in the maritime domain to deter and/or stop the security threats as the case may be. It is therefore, apt at this point to briefly look at the composition of the armed forces of the member states, noting in particular their maritime component.

The table shows the commonality in the weakness of all the GoG states' navies. In the light of the argument, so far it can be concluded that there are many reasons to develop an oil policy for the GoG by member states. However, there are

TABLE 1: ARMED FORCES OF GULF OF GUINEA STATES AS ON 2007

	Army	Navy	Air Force
Angola	107,000	1,000	6,000
Cameroon	12,500	1,300	300
Congo RC	8,000	800	1,200
DR Congo	46,000	1,000	4,000
Equatorial Guinea	1,100	120	100
Nigeria	67,000	8,000	10,000
Gabon	3,200	500	1,000
Sao Tome & Principe	NA	NA	NA

Source: Military Balance 2007

⁹ Raymond, G. "Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea" Strategic Insight, Vol.VI, Issue 1 (www.ccc/nps.edu) January 2001.

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for Security Studies in South Africa, testified before congress about the growing resistance and hostility to USA on the African continent. She quoted a State Department official as saying, "We've got a big image problem down there. Public opinion is really against getting into bed with the US, they just don't trust the US."

Many Africans have voiced a resounding "no" to AFRICOM. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has publicly denounced AFRICOM and has said it will not tolerate the presence of an American military structure on its soil. Nigeria, Libya, Botswana have made similar statements. The only government that has offered to host the headquarters is Liberia.¹⁹ Findings show that the Department of Defence failed to adequately consult with African governments and regional bodies before announcing the establishment of the command, though now it appears to be in continued consultation with African governments.²⁰

Analysis of the Activities of China and the West in Africa

China's growth and close economic ties with Africa are affecting the ability of the US and the EU to influence policies on the continent. The reason African countries can now stand up to their former colonizers is the option they have of more attractive Chinese market, which has been offering African countries better prices and more investment.

"The EU most certainly overplayed its hand in trade negotiations," Erixon observes, "They pushed Africa into China's hands. They just asked for too much. They demanded reforms from African nations that they would never be able to do." Beijing's policy of non-interference compared to the EU's big demands is what makes it such an attractive alternative, according to Erixon. The EU clearly got it wrong and upset a number of African nations.²¹ "China doesn't demand any corruption or human rights reforms. The non-interference policy applies as long as they can see results from the investments that they are making." However, "the U.S. is not pleased with the investment in Sudan," Setser has said. "The U.S. development community is worried that China's unconditional support is displacing conditional support." ²²

¹⁹ Resist AFRICOM, A Project by Hip Hop Caucus, Africa Faith and Justice Network, Foreign Policy in Focus, African Action, Trans-Africa Forum (www.sahademosocracyaction.org), (www.concedemilitaryafricanaction.org).
²⁰ Ibid.
²¹ Fredrick Erixon, ECPIE Policy Brief, an EU-China Dialogue: A New Policy Framework to Continuing Deteriorating Trade Relations, No 3/2008 (www.ecpie.org)

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The Implications of External Interest in the GOG

The current scramble for resources in the Gulf of Guinea is essentially for economic reasons. However, it connotes equally, if not more dangerous challenges to the GoG states and have underlying political, military and other socio-political implications that would necessarily affect the interests of all member states sooner than later.²² There are implications that would become manifest when these external interests begin to outbid one another.

For instance, prior to the establishment of AFRICOM, America's strategic policy towards Africa had been inconsistent, driven by emergencies and crises and differing in priorities, rather than by a considered strategy. Viewing the project with a clinical lens, 2007 one believes that AFRICOM is an expansionist tool aimed at defending the vast economic interest and empire of the US. It is clear that AFRICOM is being perceived by US as a strong military companion through which it can intervene in any part of Africa where there are real and imagined threats to US economic interests. With this view, "AFRICOM will be used to promote policies of imperialist assimilation" (Danu 2007). He further posits that through it, the formulators of AFRICOM intend to be in a position to tell Africans what to do and how to do it including whom to trade with.

Another critical issue raised against it was the rationale behind US developing a security outfit for Africa without its critical input. African leaders need to be more critical and analytical in appraising the concept of AFRICOM to know where they stand on it and must ensure that they can optimize the gains of the new developing relationships.²⁴

AFRICOM could create divisiveness among African states between those for and against it and can have negative implications for African solidarity. AFRICOM would also pose serious challenge to Nigeria's position in Africa as a regional power. Nigeria's role in the maintenance of regional peace and stability would diminish as weaker African countries may feel a greater urge to seek assistance of a far stronger and richer global power. Nigeria's influence in Africa may diminish as a consequence. The proposed establishment of a military base as part of AFRICOM could negatively affect relations among African countries, particularly between the host country whose territory would be used for launching military strikes and the victim states of such strikes. Moreover, the presence of US troops in Africa would affect the sovereignty of any African country or countries hosting AFRICOM.

22. Leander Schaefkens, *Analysis: China beats West in Africa* (www.upi.com) 2008.

23. A.G. Adewusi, "The Strategic Imperatives Confronting Nigeria in the Gulf of Guinea", A Report submitted to DRIQ Abuja, August 2004.

24. Report of Inter-Ministerial Committee on AFRICOM, Ministry of Foreign Policy Affairs, 2007.

Enhanced Security Awareness

The Nigeria military in collaboration with other stakeholders in the GoG must evolve policies that would ensure increased security awareness within the maritime sub-sector.³²

Regional Maritime Domain Awareness

Regional maritime domain awareness capability is important to support the GGCF in improving regional security. Also vital is the creation of an information sharing network and establishment of a Regional Coordination Centre. The Regional Coordination Centre will coordinate the activities of the national centers. The National Operating Centers are to be established by the member states, with each country controlling the sharing of information from its own sensors. Local sites could also be located along the coastline of member states. The Force Headquarters and Regional Coordinating Center are proposed to be located in Nigeria.³³

Level of Force Contribution

The current strengths of the armed forces of member states were taken in consideration in determining the level of force contribution. The relative size of Nigeria's armed forces bestow on her the responsibility to contribute 50% of the Force requirement while the remaining countries are to jointly contribute the balance of 50%.³⁴

Formula for Burden Sharing

In order to determine initial financial implications, it was proposed that a technical committee be set up to assess the cost of the Force structure and types of mission. Meanwhile, to determine the formula for the burden sharing, it was considered to use the percentage output of member states' crude oil production.³⁵

Developing a Strategic Approach for Enhanced Maritime Governance

Apparently in response to Nigeria's unenthusiastic reaction to AFRICOM, a US delegation came to Abuja on 28 November 2007 to lobby for the support of the country for the initiative. Consequently, an inter-Ministerial Committee on AFRICOM was set up. The Committee observed that the US has already taken a

32. O.O. Bishola, "Maritime Power and Strategy", Lecture Delivered To National War College, Course 14 on 16 October, 2005, p.27

33. DRIQ Committee Report Op Cit.

34. A DRIQ Committee Report on the Modalities for the Establishment of a Gulf of Guinea Guard Force, 2008.

35. Ibid.

The presence of the U.S and its Western allies will attract the attention of terrorists who would follow the U.S presence anywhere it goes.²⁵ Therefore, terrorism, which is one area that the US claims to be a major reason for its presence in the GoG, for the protection of oil exploration activities will surely be attracted to the area.

Perhaps the gravest concern engendered by the obtrusive scramble of the US for the region is the military bases that America has determined to establish in some of these Gulf's states. The establishment of US military bases in Sao Tome and Principe, for instance, could embolden Sao Tome against Nigeria or any other state of the zones. This could lead to an expose of the border skirmishes, which sometimes occur in this Gulf, into intractable local conflicts that could fuel be local arms race. The thesis that forms the centre piece of this page is that the pervasive entrenchment of American interests in the 'armpit of Africa' is a menace to the natural growth of the political and cultural interests of the states domicile within this Gulf. In concluding this analysis thus, the question that has to be asked is: What should the states of the GoG do to protect themselves?

In replying to this question, we will borrow a leaf from Lobengula when he said "Did you ever see a Chameleon catch a fly? Lobengula, King of Ndebele, asked of the missionary Helm. The chameleon gets behind the fly and remains motionless for some time, then it advances very slowly and gently, first putting forward one leg and then another. At last, when well within reach, it darts its tongue and the fly disappears. England is the chameleon and I am that fly."²⁶

In like manner, the US would become the chameleon while any of the GoG states could become the fly. Therefore, they cannot afford to be caught unawares. They must thus put in place mechanisms to counter any menace to their security. To avert threats, member states would have to change their perception that the US is a huge charitable organization, always willing to be magnanimous. These states should note that Americans have their own pressing national interests, which they are out to satisfy. Furthermore, these states should ensure that their socio-political sectors are kept free of foreign intervention.

Since Nigeria believes, it has a manifest destiny as a leader in the comity of African states, and is expected to assume a decisive role in African politics, a role which the world seems to have taken for granted because of its size and population", it behoves on Nigeria to invest in the development of an alternative

25. T. Makamskii, "Terrorist Threat to Energy Infrastructure Increases" in Jones Intelligence Review, 1 June 2003, pp.1-2.

26. Sidney Shippard to Sir Hercules Robinson, 24/03/85, March 1889, Africa (South) No.369, quoted in Philip Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p.305.

firm decision to create AFRICOM, which was to become fully operational by 30 Sept 2008.

In any case, the likelihood of an African consensus on the issue was remote as a number of African countries (Liberia, Ethiopia among others) had already positioned themselves to host the command. Some of the Committee's recommendations include:³⁶

Nigeria should avoid hosting AFRICOM if requested to do so by US, because hosting the command would not only affect her sovereignty but also diminish her influence in Africa as she could be portrayed as a US surrogate. Furthermore, it could not only create credibility problems for her among African states but also set her on a collision course with some of them.

Nigeria should recognize her lack of capacity and note that she may not succeed in dissuading other African countries from hosting the project as a result of the overbearing influence of the US on these counties and what advantages they may think are derivable from being a host to AFRICOM.

Nigeria should disregard the issue of whether she should oppose or support AFRICOM because it will come into existence regardless of her position on the matter or that of the African Union, ECOWAS or any individual African country.

Nigeria should be prepared to work with AFRICOM when it is established, considering that it would become the new platform for all military relations between individual African countries and the United States.

So, any barrier to improve the governance and security of the GoG will need to be grounded in realism and must take into full account the multiple obstacles to success. A strategic approach for the GoG therefore requires consistency between domestic and partner initiated programs, as well as significant regional collaboration, given the trans-national character of most threats and vulnerabilities. Thus, an effective strategy must incorporate national, regional and global realities. While the precise configuration would largely be country-specific, effective strategies would broadly adhere to a four-fold framework encompassing:³⁷

Demonsrable Political Commitment.

Increased Operational Efficiency.

Transparent Regulatory Systems Heightened Public Awareness.

36. Inter-Ministerial Committee on AFRICOM, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007.

37. Raymond Gilpin, *Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea*, Strategic Insight, Vol.VI, Issue 1 (2007), www.csis.org/ips/ohs

basis of national security within the framework of integrated policies among the states of this Gulf. Although, it has been stated that "there comes a time when a sovereign and independent country has to decide, for better or for worse, that her national interest must take precedence over good neighborliness,"⁷⁷ Nigeria should "in the pursuit of this objective, not consider any sacrifice too great."⁷⁸

Hence, Nigeria along with any willing GoG state should embark on the development of technological, economic and military capacity that would satisfy the urgent needs of other states in the region through complex horizontal and vertical links: financial, technical, trade, investment, development assistance, military cooperation and the likes. By and large, therefore, there is need for a long term perspective planning by Nigeria which should ultimately seek to integrate factors of defence, economic development and transnational exchanges within a broader context of security management relations amongst these states. This suggestion is necessitated by the fact that the security of any state can no longer be seen as an isolated concern.⁷⁹

In other world, member states must come together and evolve a collective security mechanism that would ensure security of lives and investment. It is to this end that Nigeria has proposed the formation of the Gulf of Guinea Guard Force (GGGF), which will ensure security in the region.

STRATEGIES TO MEET THE CHALLENGES IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

Establishment of Collective Security Mechanism

The establishment of a collective security mechanism within the provisions of the GGC treaty is the most viable option for the defence of the sub-region. The collective security mechanism would entail the creation of a robust, highly mobile and integrated GGC Rapid Reaction Force. The proposed force shall have a maritime component as well as land and air forces made up from member states. This would facilitate adequate defence of the political and socio-economic interests of the member states. Apart from the benefit of peace and security, the regional defence arrangement would also ensure combined force planning, collective intelligence effort, burden sharing and aggregation of resources. It would also include combined training, policy coordination and clearly defined command and control measures. The arrangement would negate likely suspicion as to the intent of

77. See Gray L. Cowan, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy", in Titman and Cole (eds), *The Nigerian Political Scene*, Durham, N.C:Duke University Press, 1962, p.124

78. Joe Garba, *Diplomatic Solidarity: Nigeria Foreign Policy 1975-79*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1987, p.20

79. Ibid, p.102

Finally, as evidenced by their active participation and policy commitments at various regional programs, countries in the GoG should recognize the importance of maritime security in the sub-region. Already many governments are taking steps to formulate and implement national and regional strategies to address the growing challenges they face. GoG leaders now need to move from good intentions to tangible results. It is also clear that no single country will be successful on its own. The benefits of the region's abundantly endowed maritime domain could be derived through the declaration of firm commitment to collective action. A shared investment in maritime security (which is a "public good") would have far-reaching human security benefits, and positive global implications.³⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above analysis, the following recommendations can be made to address the challenges in the GoG:

- GoG member states should expedite action to ensure immediate settlement of all boundary disputes.
- Joint Development Zones should be establishment among concerned member states to ensure equitable resource control in the GoG.
- GoG member states should present a common front in negotiating with the USA and other foreign powers on the control and development of the GoG.
- GoG states should expedite action on the establishment of the Gulf of Guinea Guard Force (GGGF) and a Technical Committee to work out the cost of the Force structure and the types of mission the GGGF would engage in.
- In addition, respective GoG member states should ensure the actualization of the underlisted strategies at their national level: Demonsrable Political Commitment, Increased Operational Efficiency, Transparent Regulatory Systems and Heightened Public Awareness.

CONCLUSION

In recent times, the Gulf of Guinea has become the subject of interest for a myriad of constituencies. The reason for such interest is the presence of untold wealth, in the form of oil deposits underground and under the sea. The new relevance of the require has led US to re-evaluate its regional commitments and counter long-standing French and British influence and rising Chinese stakes there,

38. Communique on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea - Ministerial Conference, Cotonou, Benin, 2006.

a member state increasing its level of military capability, as it would be seen to serve a common purpose.³⁰

The proposed GGCF would be a mixed force to be led by the Navy. It would be used as an instrument for regional and collective security to monitor and protect the common maritime interests of member states of the GoG. The structure of the propose force is as follows:

Size and Composition of Force

Size. The size and composition of the force is to be decided by the vastness of the sea area to be patrolled, the nature of future tasks; such as, oil rig protection and rescue of hostages. It can be ussened that mixed force that would require army elements. The need for sustained aerial surveillance of the maritime environment will necessitate the use of maritime patrol aircraft.³¹

Composition

Army Elements

The army elements that would be required by this Force would essentially form the Special Boat Sections (SBS). The proposed GGCF would thus consist of 1 x Battalion of Special Forces with full complements.

Naval Component

Against the backdrop of the characteristics of the desired ships (such as speed and endurance) for patrol, a total of 9 x Offshore Patrol Boats (OPVs) with integral helicopters would be required. Additionally, about 20 x Inshore Patrol Boats and 50 x Flat Bottom Boats would also be required to enhance the policing duties of the naval component.

Airforce Component

The number of Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) required to conduct aerial surveillance of the maritime environment under consideration was calculated based essentially on aircraft time on task of about 8 hours per aircraft and equipment borne onboard. A total of 9 x MPAs and 4 x shore based helicopters would therefore be required.

The GGCF would be a standing force with members that will be expected to rotate at specific intervals. The proposed Force would also have both operational and administrative headquarters in designated countries.

30. L. De Plessis & Hough, *M. Protecting Sub-Sahara Africa: The Military Challenge* (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers 2000), p.251

31. A DRIQ Committee Report on the Modalities for the Establishment of a Gulf of Guinea Guard Force 2006.

This led the US for establish an African Command and plan a regional military base, and restate its views of the GoG as an area of "national strategic interest" Cloaked in "humanitarian" guise, AFRICOM, poses an imminent threat to self-determination on the continent compared to the activities of other powers in the region. Rather than accepting a US - imposed order, Africans should "develop Africa's own strong, effective and timely security capacities."

AFRICOM is a dangerous reminder of US military expeditionary policies around the globe. Such foreign-policy priorities, as well as the use of weapons of war to combat terrorist threats on the African continent, will not achieve Amerce national security. AFRICOM will only inflame threats against the United States, make Africa even more dependent on external powers and delay responsible African solutions to continental security issues.

There are many reasons to develop an oil policy for the GoG by the member states. However, considering the commonality in the weakness of all the GoG states' naval and air forces, there are also many reasons to apprehend that such a policy might not work. The weakness of the member states' armed forces is a problem that will be solved only with a paradigm shift in most of the GoG states' priority from regime security to human security and economic development of the region. Exerting effective and sustained governance over the vast maritime domain is the daunting task facing countries in the GoG and the newly established Commission. It is therefore, becomes imperative to pay more attention to the naval forces and re-position the fleet to provide credible punch in securing the Gulf. The member states have to also reverse the initiatives of extra-African actors who have seized the opportunity of the vacuum to foray into the region. They must resist American interest in the region. Since this interest is strong and the GoG states can do nothing to stop the American hegemony; it is imperative that member states come together and put in place a collective security mechanism. Hence, the establishment of the proposed Gulf of Guinea Guard Force is an idea of the time. The GoG states would have to expedite action on immediate commencement of operation.

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live in a deplorable condition trying hard to work out a living and facing all kinds of dangers on a daily basis. They only live in an unhealthy environment but also pose threats to society in various ways.

The scale, magnitude and dimensions of the problem are increasingly being felt, giving rise to the need for devising ways of rehabilitating the floating population in general, and the street children in particular with a view to improving their socio-economic conditions.

Reassures for Being Street Children

Table 1: Distribution according to reasons of becoming street children (n=95)

Type of reason	Male (n=72)		Female (n=23)		Total (n=95)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poverty	27	37.5	10	43.48	37	38.95
Job search	30	41.67	6	26.09	36	37.89
Removed with parents	6	8.33	-	-	6	6.32
Land erosion	3	4.17	2	8.7	5	5.26
Family conflict	2	2.78	1	4.35	3	3.16
Trafficking	3	4.17	3	13.04	6	6.31
Run away	1	1.39	1	4.35	2	2.11
Total	72	75.79	23	24.21	95	100

Source: Author's survey results

Out of 101 respondents interviewed, 95 (94.06%) had migrated to Dhaka for various reasons the remaining 6 were born in Dhaka. Among them 72 (95.00%) were male and 23 (88.46%) were female. Most male 30 (41.67%) children migrated to the city for employment and most female 10 (43.48%) street children migrated to Dhaka due to poverty. Thus either poverty or unemployment were the prime reasons for migration to Dhaka city.

The study, it found out that various reasons force children to arrive in Dhaka from different parts of the country, and they end up on the streets, finding no other shelter.

One of the main reasons of being on the streets is poverty, as mentioned by 38.95% of the street children interviewed. In most cases, these children do not have parents and have to feed for themselves. In cases, where parents are present, they are engaged in low paying jobs and cannot make ends meet. So, children are

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He served in various capacities in command, staff and operations including Military Observer in UN Iran Iraq Military Observer Group - Iran (UNIMOG) in 1990 and Senior Military Observer in UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2004. He is a member of the Royal Institute of Navigation and US Naval Institute.

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compelled to engage in odd jobs, such as selling flowers, newspapers, books and water, or do scavenging and other street-centred works. 37.89% of interviewees came to the capital because of economic reasons. This can be attributed to the search for employment opportunities, better livelihood, more income, attraction of city life, and its facilities.

Bangladesh being a disaster-prone country, floods, land erosion and cyclone are annual phenomena every year there is a rise in the number of homeless, landless and helpless people because of them. 5.26% of street children interviewed cited these reasons.

Breakdown of families due to death or divorce, polygamy etc. force children to live with step-parents. Often tortured by their stepbrothers, or, stepsisters, trifle or no mistakes at all, or unhappiness and bitterness in the family, force the family into an uncertain future. Besides, various forms of family conflicts led 3.16% to come to Dhaka city.

It was found from interviewing urchins that they were tempted by others to leave their families through offers of well-paying jobs, marriage etc. by traffickers, drug dealers, pimps, friends and acquaintances with ill motives. 6.31% children fell into these traps and ended up in streets with broken dreams, unable to return to normal lives because of such people.

Illiteracy, ignorance, large family size, poverty etc. often lead to ill treatment and harsh behaviour by rural people. 2.11% of respondents said that they had run away from home to get respite from such maltreatment.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE STREET CHILDREN

The data for this research was been collected through field surveys conducted in 16 locations in Dhaka city, where the concentration of street dwellers is high, namely Sadarghat Launch Terminal, Gabtoli Bus Terminal, Kamalapur Railway Station, different market places, Mazars, traffic signals etc. A total of 101 street children were interviewed of whom 75 were boys and 26 were girls. Besides, Focus Group Discussions were held with another 20 children and 6 officials of 'Aor Bhuban', a Drop-in Centre for boys (a centre used by street children for rest, recreation etc.) in Karwan Bazar and 4 officials and 15-20 girls of 'Tarar Bhuban' drop-in centre in Mirpur run by Padakshp Manabik Unmayan Kendra aided by PCAR. Also, discussions were held with concerned officials of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

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STREET CHILDREN OF DHAKA CITY : WHERE THEY ARE HEADING TO ?

Joint Secretary Shabeen Khan, ndc

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is among the most densely populated countries in the world and has a high poverty rate. Recent estimates of Bangladesh's population range from 142 to 159 million, making it the 7th most populous nation in the world. With a land area of 144,000 square kilometers, the population density is remarkably high.¹ Dhaka was ranked the 24th most populous city in the world in 1991 with an estimated 6.5 million population according to a report by United Nations (UN). It is believed that the city would become the sixth largest in the world by 2010 with a population of 18 million. With the increase of landlessness in rural areas and consequent large-scale rural urban migration, the number of 'floating' people, especially street children is increasing rapidly (approx. 2,49,200).²

The children of today constitute our future. Proper upbringing and guidance will enable them to become assets for Bangladesh. However, the sights of pavement dwellers, especially half-clad malnourished children reveal their plight. The inability of street children to integrate mainstream society leads them to engage crime and anti-social activities that have far reaching adverse consequences on society. The purpose of this paper is to develop a proper understanding of their socio-economic condition, and account for their coming to the street, the extent of adversities they face, and the consequences for society, the economy and politics and national security. The study will also look into the need for devising ways of rehabilitating them, improving their socio-economic conditions, assessing the negative impacts and future scenario.

Social issues that arise out of the situation include insecure streets, vulnerability of street children, violence, exploitation, pollution and health risks. The greatest social problem with street children is their inability to remain within mainstream society. Political parties' use children by in the street are waste of a precious resource since they are used for processions, picketing, attendance in

¹ Wikipedia, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Bangladesh accessed on 12-09-2008.
² Estimation of the Size of Street Children and their Projection for Major Urban Areas of Bangladesh 2005 commissioned to BIDS by ARISE

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Table 2: Distribution according to age and sex. (n=101)

Age group (Years)	Male (n=75)		Female (n=26)	
0-5 years	N	%	N	%
6-10 years	36	48.00%	12	46.15%
11-15 years	35	46.67%	11	42.30%
>16 years	04	5.33%	-	-
Total	75		26	

Source: Author's survey results

The above table shows the distribution of street children surveyed in prime areas of Dhaka. Among 101 street children 75 (74.25%) were male and 26(25.75%) were female. Considering the specific age group, highest number of male 36 (48.00%) and female 12 (46.15%) street children were in the age group of 6-10 years. No male children were found in 0-5 years of age group and no female children were found in >16 years of age group. The reason for non-availability of girls above 16 years is an indication of the lack of safety in the streets for adolescent girls. These girls apparently have no other choice but to engage in prostitution.

Table 3: Distribution according to dwelling place (n=101) -

Particulars	Male (n=75)		Female (n=26)		Total (n=101)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Slum	15	20	9	34.61	24	23.76
Road side	14	18.66	1	3.84	15	14.85
Park	4	5.33	-	-	4	3.96
Railway station	13	17.33	10	38.46	23	22.77
Bus terminal	11	14.66	5	19.23	16	15.84
Market place	5	6.66	-	-	5	4.85
Launch terminal	6	8	-	-	6	5.94
Club/Mazar/workshop	7	9.33	1	3.84	8	7.92
Total	75	74.27	26	25.75	101	100

Source: Author's survey results

This table shows that the highest number of female 10 (38.46%) street children dwell in the Railway station followed by slums 09 (34.61%). They prefer covered overhead to open sky due to security concern. On the other hand, highest number of male children dwell in slum followed by those living on road side.

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meetings etc all for politicians' selfish gains. Children on the streets create economic losses as potential resource turns into burden for the society due to lack of proper upbringing and education.

Very few researchers have undertaken an in depth study on this issue. Future policy makers' intent upon addressing these issues may consider the findings of this paper useful. Future researchers may also be benefited from its research findings. The data for this study comes from the existing literature, newspaper reports, government documents, publications, internet search, focus group discussions with key stakeholders, interviews with concerned officials of the Ministries of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Social Welfare (MoSW), Primary and Mass Education (PMEd) and other related organisations as well as through case study and field survey conducted in selected spots of Dhaka covering 101 children.

Profile of Street Children

Dhaka city was chosen as the study area because of several reasons. Dhaka is the capital and largest city in Bangladesh. Almost 12 million people live in this city. An estimated 7 million of them live below the poverty line. Poverty family disintegration, natural disasters, lack of jobs, and the belief that Dhaka city has lot of opportunities for improving the standard of living continuously lead a large number of people to migrate from villages to the city.

Arriving in this overcrowded, competitive and complex city the migrants face the harsh realities of life. Jobless and homeless they often end up in the streets. Children are the worst sufferers, and constitute a large portion of the floating population. A study conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in 2004 showed that out of the 6,74,178 street children in Bangladesh approximately 36.96% live in the streets of Dhaka. The variety and complexity of the problems faced and work done by the street children of Dhaka are why it has been chosen as the study area.

Street Children

Street children can be defined children below 18 who pass their days and nights on streets. They may or may not have parents or guardians. These children

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Table 4: Distribution according to occupation (n=101)

Type of occupation	Male (n=75)		Female (n=26)		Total (n=101)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Porter(coolie)	12	16	-	-	12	11.88
Hawker	2	2.66	-	-	2	1.98
Fielder	3	4.17	4	15.38	13	12.87
Beggar	4	5.33	7	26.92	11	10.89
Car cleaner	7	9.33	-	-	7	6.93
Shoe shiner	3	4.17	-	-	3	2.97
Hotel boy	1	1.33	-	-	1	0.99
Workshop labourer	2	2.66	-	-	2	1.98
Shop worker	4	5.33	-	-	4	3.96
Garbage picker	3	4.17	9	34.61	40	39.6
Flower seller	2	2.66	2	7.69	4	3.96
Others	-	-	2	7.69	2	1.98
Total	75	74.26	26	25.75	101	100

Source: Author's survey results

This table shows that the highest number of males 12 (16.00%) worked as porter (coolie) and highest number of 09 (34.61%) females were garbage pickers followed by 7 (26.92%) beggars.

Table 5: Distribution according to working hours (n=101)

Work Duration (in hours)	Male (n=75)		Female (n=26)		Total (n=101)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
4 hours	7	9.33	5	19.23	12	11.88
6 hours	19	25.33	11	42.3	30	29.7
8 hours	41	54.66	7	26.92	48	47.52
12 hours	4	5.33	3	11.53	7	6.93
Above 12 hours	4	5.33	-	-	4	3.9
Total	75	74.25	26	25.75	101	100

Source: Author's survey results

This table shows that 6 hours working duration was found in 11 (42.30%) female street children and 8 hours was found in 41 (54.66%) male children. More than 12 hours working period was found in 04 (5.33%) male children.

Table 6: Distribution according to daily income (n=101)

Income (in Taka)	Male (n=75)		Female (n=26)		Total (n=101)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
20 - 50	1	1.33	12	46.15	13	12.88
50 - 80	17	22.66	6	23.07	23	22.77
80 - 100	15	20	2	7.69	17	16.83
100 - 200	16	21.33	7	26.92	23	22.82
> 200	6	8	3	11.53	9	8.91
Total	75	74.25	26	25.75	101	100

Source: Author's survey results

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